SAIS I

The Ramesside–Third Intermediate Period at Kom Rebwa



PENELOPE WILSON

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The Ramesside-Third Intermediate Period at Kom Rebwa

by

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إلى حازم وميادة

وساعات لعب الا ستغماية التي جعلت

من تأليف هذا الكتاب نزهة في حديقة الأطفال

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Sa el-Hagar workforces
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2000
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2002
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2003
Mohammed Bayoumi, Mohammed Aoueb, Reda el Bishe, Esmaiein el Bishe, Ibrahim el Darawi, Ramadan Selim, Rageb Haged, Iman Aoueb, Rasha el Bishe, Hoda Sukari, Hayam Selim, Magda el Darawi, Abeer Daoud, Fatima Sherif, Nisma Shahawi.

2004
Reda el Bishe, Mohammed Aoueb, Esmaiein el Bishe, Hayam Selim, Iman Aoueb, Qamara el Bishe.

Chapter 1

Kom Rebwa: Excavation 1

1.1 Description of the Site

Kom Rebwa is the name given to two areas of protected Antiquities land within the Northern Enclosure of the Sais archaeological area (Figure 1).

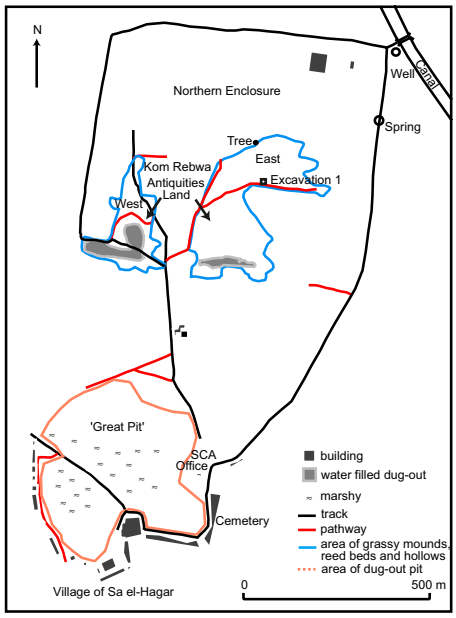


Figure 1. Map showing location of Excavation 1.

Kom Rebwa East and Kom Rebwa West were once the locations for impressive standing mud-brick remains, which were seen by western travellers in the nineteenth century. The area in Kom Rebwa East was given the name of the *Qasr* 'Citadel' by locals in the nineteenth century and recorded by Foucart on his detailed plan from 1898 (Foucart, 1898: Fig. 19). Since that time the mud-brick has been mined away for *sebakh* 'fertiliser' and the buildings described by Champollion, Wilkinson and others have disappeared. The remaining areas consist of low, salty mounds covered in sharp alfalfa grass and tamarisk bushes. The surface soil is usually dusty and dry and contains sherds of pottery. In some areas, evidence for the industrial mining used to extract the *sebakh* is clear, where deep trenches and holes have been left, filled up with water and then become reed-beds. Such areas on the southern side of the Kom Rebwa mounds indicate the fortunate escape from complete destruction of the remaining mounds. These mounds are, in fact, fairly extensive, with Kom Rebwa East covering an area of approximately 7.8 hectares (78,581 m^2) and Kom Rebwa West 4.7 hectares (46,920 m^2). The contour survey of the Egypt Exploration Society in 1997 was unable to locate patterns of building outlines, but a few possible areas of building foundations were noted. Most of the areas consist of hillocks covered in grass (Wilson, 2006a: 97-117).

The pottery found during survey work on the surface of Kom Rebwa was degraded and salt-eroded, so that it was difficult to obtain an accurate date just from surface finds in the areas. Pottery from a field lying between the two zones, was datable to Dynasty 26, with some pottery sherds of Roman date. Field walking in the area also found small fragments of Greek black gloss ware, which were too small to allow for accurate dating, although their presence was suggestive of material from the 7th or 6th century BCE.

A small hill was selected for a sherd survey and sectioned. The material from it was extremely mixed and in a dumped context. The diagnostic material from it was dated to the Third Intermediate Period and showed that if the ruins seen in the nineteenth century had been from buildings of Dynasty 26, they had been removed, in the same way that the imposing enclosure walls had been reduced to a mud track. Any remaining archaeological material, therefore, could belong to the earlier and unexplored periods of Saite history and development.



Figure 2: Area of Excavation 1, view north.

The excavation at Kom Rebwa East (Excavation 1) was begun in August 2000 for one month, with the aim of consolidating

information relating to the underlying preserved archaeological material in the area of Kom Rebwa (Figure 2). After a cautious beginning, it became apparent that there were several overlying phases of archaeological remains in the chosen area beneath a thick and non-uniform layer of disturbed earth or *redeem*.

The location of the trench had been chosen because of the appearance of the hillocks and grassy mounds in this particular area of Kom Rebwa East. There was a rectangular sunken area, bordered by relatively low mounds, with a direct entry to the pathway to the south. It was not clear whether this was a natural feature the topography of which matched an underlying archaeological feature, or whether it was an area which had been excavated for *sebakh* and had formed the limit of *sebakh* digging and, perhaps, had been a loading bay for the collection of the *sebakh* by light railway (Figure 3). In order to ascertain the reason for the shape of the area, the Excavation 1 trench was marked out on the western side of the rectangular area in a 10 metres by 10 metres trench, which encompassed two low mounds, with a pathway running between them. It covered the mounds to the west of the rectangular area and a small part of the sunken central aspect of the rectangular depression. It seemed likely that if the mounds comprised *redeem* only, then the area within the rectangle might have been dug down as far as the standing remains.

It became clear by the end of the first season that there were well-preserved mud-brick remains under 1 m to 1.5 metres of fill and that both the fill and the mud-brick structures contained a great deal of pottery and some small finds. Subsequent excavations were carried out in 2001 (3 weeks), 2002 (1 month), 2003 (1 month) and 2004 (1 month), with post-excavation work continuing from 2000 onwards. Due to the limited extent of the area excavated, the main phase of the site contained only a courtyard, a large oven, the main room of a house, part of a storeroom and an outer area of the house. It also contained a large amount of pottery, both from the actual contexts of human occupation as well as from the fabric of the buildings. In addition, because the upper layers had been dug out and discarded, the material contained within them was concentrated in places in small dumps, perhaps because the soil had been sieved, a common practice in the collection of *sebakh*.

It seems that when the *sebakh* diggers had started their work, they had begun digging at the then ground level next to the path which borders Kom Rebwa East to the south. They may even have had a Light Railway line or a Decauville railway line with trucks extending across this part of the site westward from the Light Railway line between Disuq and Tanta, which ran along the Eastern Enclosure edge (Wilson, 2006a: 82-3). As the work had progressed from the path northward, the digging cut through the underlying archaeological remains. The area had already been flattened, perhaps already by 1897, when the standing mud-brick remains of Dynasty 26 had been removed. It is likely that the Kom Rebwa area had been brought under the protection of the Antiquities Laws enacted in 1909, so that the *sebakh* work may have happened at the end of the nineteenth century or very early in the twentieth century. The removal of the *sebakh* meant that any archaeological material inside the rectangular space chosen for excavation had been removed down to a deeper level than the surrounding mounds. Loose earth and fill was thrown back into the pit created, so that the untouched remains lay at a lower level. The mound areas, then covered in scrub and sharp grasses, did not have such large amounts of fill lying upon them and the archaeological material was relatively close to the surface. This meant that because Excavation 1 straddled the mounds and the flatter inside area of the excavated zone, the archaeology had already been cut through in a diagonal fashion, effectively leaving the section of this area as a stepped slice through the various phases. The excavation quickly uncovered material in the eastern side of the trench, which was already much earlier in date than the material and buildings preserved on the western side. A section through the excavation shows how the layers had been curtailed on the eastern side, but were higher and fuller on the western side.

There seem to have been two main phases for the *sebakh* digging itself. The first had been the work which had cleared the *Qasr* 'Citadel' recorded in this place by Foucart and others in the nineteenth century (Wilson, 2006a: 103); the second was the subsequent further removal of material resulting in the dug-out zones in Kom Rebwa West and East, which formed the

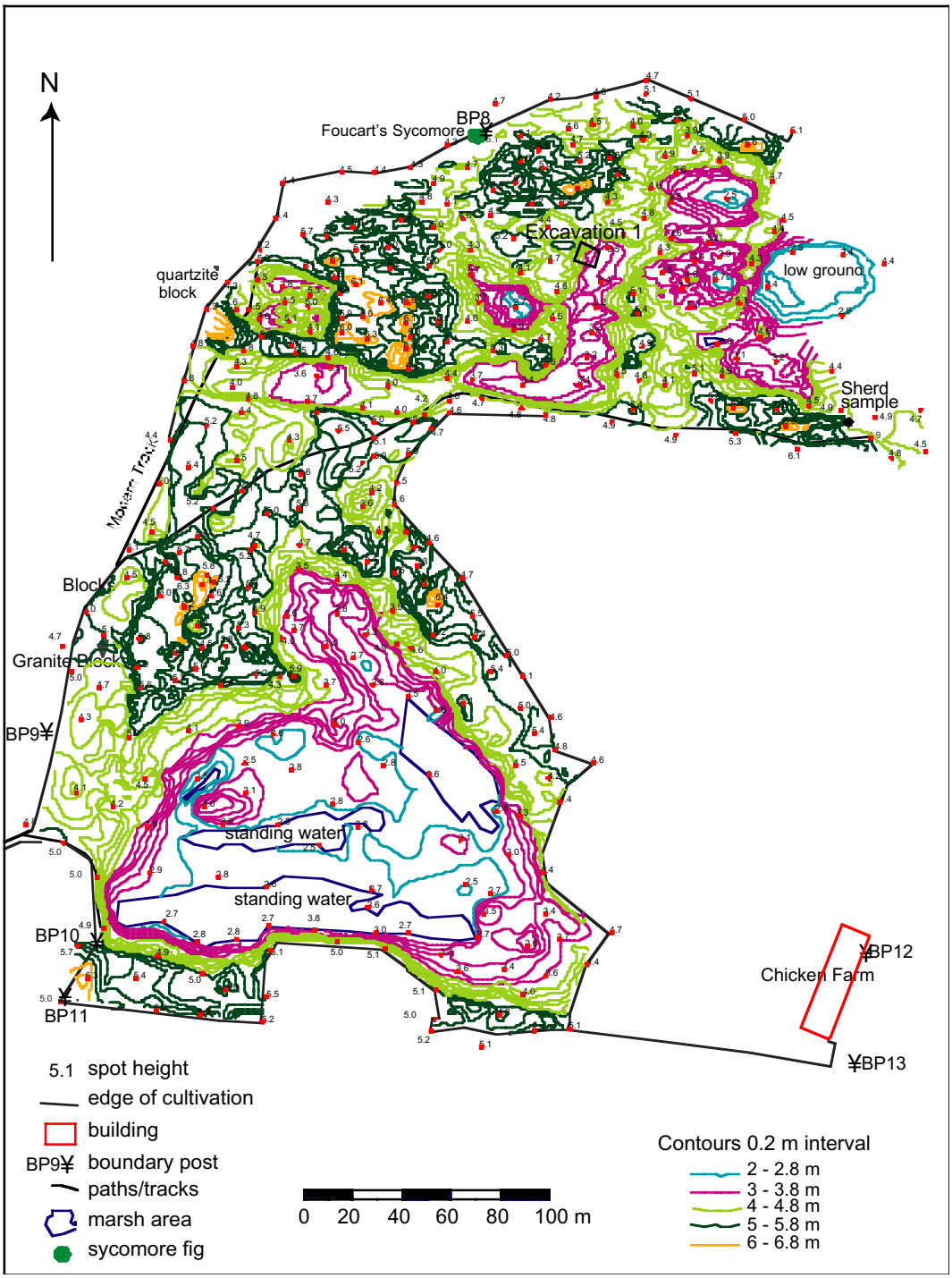


Figure 3. Detailed contour map of Kom Rebwa East, showing the location of Excavation 1. (EES Survey 1997, James Wright and Penelope Wilson).

topography of the area chosen for the archaeological excavation. The exact dates of these two main phases, whether they were contiguous or separated by a long period of time, whether they involved different companies extracting *sebakh* or were the work of more localised interests, are unknown. During one of the operations there was some interference in the central area of the trench, when the two door jambs standing at the front of the main house

were uncovered. The *sebakh* digging had proceeded as far west into the area as the doorway. The diggers had located the doorway and extracted the upper part of the western door jamb which was not found in the modern excavation. The eastern jamb fell over and was left lying until uncovered by this excavation. The extent of the digging, therefore, could be traced within the excavation trench, running across the eastern end of the main room in the house in the main phase. In this case, even the well-preserved remains appeared to be only partially preserved and this should be borne in mind when the results of the excavation are considered.

The disturbed nature of the excavation trench meant that any quantitative analysis of the pottery finds was not possible in a meaningful way, that the layout of the buildings discovered could not be discussed because a whole set of buildings was not uncovered, and that the relationship of various areas of the site to others was also not ascertainable from this work. Instead, the aim of the work was to investigate the nature of the stratified remains at Kom Rebwa, their date, phasing and the way in which the settlement here had developed over a period of time. In addition, it was hoped to form a pottery corpus, for the site with its phases clearly delineated in order to be able to compare the types, wares and function of the material from other sites, particularly those in the Delta and especially, as it turned out, at Qantir, Memphis, Tanis and other well published corpora from Mendes, Amarna and Elephantine. The mission was assisted and advised in this task by Sylvie Marchand and Catherine Defernez from the French Institute in Cairo, who applied a rigorous system to the collection of the material, initial ideas about dating and typologies, and critical suggestions about the presentation of the data which forms the bulk of the detail in this report. The final report, however, has been compiled by the Field Director, based upon this valuable advice, but within a different context to that of a pottery catalogue. It was hoped that all of the finds and data could be integrated to give a rounded picture of the site's development, while at the same time highlighting issues arising from the material, which could be compared across sites of this type. The material was found to date from the Late New Kingdom, perhaps as early as Dynasty 19 through to the end of the New Kingdom, with a *floruit* in the Ramesside period in Dynasty 20, the date of the main house phase, and then a re-establishment of less grand domestic areas in the Third Intermediate Period. While the pottery contributes to this developmental discussion in an important way, the archaeological data provides the background framework into which the pottery fits, but at the same time the cultural continuities or differences evident from the material data can be examined in the light of the hiatuses in the archaeology. These variations will be used to form the basis for a discussion of how the site of Sais developed in this particular area and whether there is evidence in the cultural record of the developing importance of the site in the Third Intermediate Period, leading to the eventual foundation and consolidation of the new capital of Dynasty 26 at Sais.

The same is also true to a lesser extent of the material which has been found from the Old Kingdom. The excavation itself did not extend deep enough to reach Old Kingdom settlement levels but pottery found continuously in the excavation and particularly in the levels of the New Kingdom foundations points to a thriving Old Kingdom settlement and possible cemetery, perhaps under the area of Kom Rebwa and Excavation 1. The reworking of the material into the fabric of the New Kingdom and Third Intermediate Period town is in itself interesting, suggesting a high level of change and interference at the site during the New Kingdom, but it also indicates another hiatus, this time in the pottery record. No clear Middle Kingdom material was recognised on the eastern side of Kom Rebwa, however, so further work remains for the understanding of how the site was used over a long period of time.

Such archaeological gaps may be merely functions of the small areas chosen for excavation at Sa el-Hagar within the remit of the current project, operating within the wider context of the Sais and its Hinterland Project funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council. The work can, however, form the basis for discussions about the permanent locations of sites, transience within the locales of settlements, the reaction to river, flood and other environmental factors and the value of 'site memory' in developing and founding settlements as opposed to cult sites, where the 'cult memory' for temples is much

stronger. Of course, temple and associated sites may be inseparable entities, but without evidence for a complete town structure at Sais so far, then any discussion of the way in which the site was founded, developed and abandoned is limited to the small amount of data now recovered. Further work on the extent of the domestic areas and the temporal stratigraphy of the Kom Rebwa site will be able to supplement and refine the discussions initiated here, as well as complement the stratigraphic sequences and cultural developments now available after concentrated settlement archaeology work in the last thirty years in Egypt and particularly that in the floodplain of the Delta and Valley.

The drill augering programme at Sais has included the Kom Rebwa area and the results from this work have some bearing on understanding some of the stratigraphical changes within the excavation, providing a basis for understanding the underlying geoarchaeological information as well as offering a valuable comparative body of data for refining the understanding and interpretation of drill auger results. The geological data from drill augers is often complemented by archaeological material, but in the case of features such as mud-brick walls, pits and fill containing potter, it is sometimes difficult to distinguish between such levels in a drill core. By drilling at Rebwa in contexts which were then excavated, the data can be compared in order to arrive at an understanding of what was contained within the drill cores. In addition, greater gaps in the record, flooding events and abandonments of areas may be suggested by such comparisons in order to bring together the two types of data from the cores and provide a smaller, human scale for information which sometimes applies at a geological scale and is not particularly useful for archaeologists. The results of these investigations are pertinent for the deeper levels of archaeological material remaining at Kom Rebwa and which date back in some places to the Predynastic period.

The archaeological material in Kom Rebwa seems to be situated on relatively high ground, so that in Excavation 1 no water was encountered until the test trench was excavated through it at the end of the work. This suggests that for up to 2 m in depth at least, it may be possible to excavate in the Kom Rebwa areas without needing dewatering equipment and that material obtained will not be subject to the problems of water logging. Further work to refine the underlying topography of the area may help to establish potentially suitable areas for further work on stratigraphic sequences, but also show whether the local situation in Kom Rebwa East is that different from other areas at the site.

1.2 Phasing of Excavation 1 (Appendix 1)

Initially, the excavation was divided into several strata — in some places up to 6 — and locus numbers, before true contexts became apparent within the fill at the upper levels of the site. The locus numbers were determined by dividing the trench down the middle on a north-south axis and then into four sections on the western side and four sections on the eastern side. The strata were determined by the digging on different days and then by any slight changes in the nature of the fill.

Once contexts were established it became apparent that the upper strata best fitted into the description of context [1000], but the locus numbers were still useful for pinpointing the exact position on the site and of determining material, which could be grouped. The first excavation trench was 10 m by 10 m in size and so incorporated 8 loci, with the odd numbers along the western side and the even numbers along the eastern side. When the trench was extended by a further 2.5 m to the south, two further loci, 9 and 10, were added to the sequence.

The contexts were used to describe different features, parts of features (walls, ovens, thresholds etc.) and pits as well as layers of material (Appendix 2). The site was phased from the top down, as the actual stratified material at the site is likely to be fairly deep.

Phase I: Overburden
[1000] and all stratum-locus levels (except for some specific features, see below).

This phase also incorporated the *sebakhin* digging, which created 'new' floors and the levels at which they stopped digging. [2000-1], [2002-3] and [2005-8]. The phase was a disturbed layer of fill and top-soil.

Phase II: Late Ramesside-Third Intermediate Period (Dynasty 20-21)
Phase II comprised the features on the western side of the trench, unaffected by *sebakhin* digging and built on top of earlier features. They included the first Oven 1 [1012] and perhaps the top of Oven 2 [1013], although it is designated as Stratum 4, Locus 5. The phase also included the group of ovens underlying the walls in the north-western corner of the trench in an earlier part of the phase, after the collapse of the house, while [1013] was still in operation, but before the building of Oven 1 and the walls on top of Oven 3. Phase I appears to be a Late New Kingdom-Third Intermediate Period settlement containing ephemeral sets of narrow, mud-plastered walls of houses, with hearths and ovens, enclosing smaller spaces and oriented slightly north-west to south-east.
The Phase II contexts were: [1001] to [1012] and [1014] and[1016] to [1018].

Phase II-III: Late Ramesside (Dynasty 20)
This transitional phase included Oven 3 and the contexts [1023] to [1027] and [1036] to [1038].

Phase III: Late Ramesside Period (Dynasty 20)
This was the major and best preserved phase of the site and comprises context [1013] and contexts relating to the features of a sequence of domestic buildings, including a main room (Room 1), courtyard with an adjoining large circular oven and part of a storeroom (Annexe). The area to the north of the trench may be part of a second house or part of the first house (Room 2), but was used for the dumping of waste or keeping of animals. The house complex seemed to have formed the basis for some of the buildings of the Third Intermediate Period, with the use of the walls as foundations for later walls. The ovens themselves also continued in use or were re-structured in the same place for use. The whole area was oriented north-south with the front door of the main room facing north.

The main room of the house exhibited several floor phases, but the final phase suggested that it had been abandoned, perhaps due to relocation or some other factor. The house dated to the Ramesside period and, therefore, was contemporary with other Ramesside Delta developments, particularly the later phases at Qantir and Memphis. The material represents the buildings, their floor layers and collapse layers and comprised contexts [1013] and [1015], [1019] to [1022], [1028] to [1031], [1033] to [1035], [1039] to [1046], [1048], [1051], [1054], [1065-6], [1080], [1096] to [1098] and [1100].

Phase III-IV: Late Ramesside Period (Dynasty 20)
The floor levels of Room 1 gave way to the prepared foundations for the house. This was the level of the interface between them. It included contexts [1050], [1056] and [1074].

Phase IV: Ramesside Period (Dynasty 20)
This phase included the foundations of the Ramesside House and comprised contexts: [1032], [1055], [1061-1063], [1069], [1072-3], [1077-1079], [1081], [1083-4], [1088-9], [1092-3] and [1102] to [1110].

Phase IV-V: Ramesside Period (Dynasty 20)
This phase was the interface between the house foundations and industrial area, and included contexts [1087], [1094-5], [1099] and [1101].

Phase V: Ramesside Period (Dynasty 19-20)
This was a phase of industrial activity at the site comprising two main ovens, a kiln and possibly a further industrial area to the south (unexcavated). The phase seems to have been abandoned, perhaps at a time contemporary with the collapse of the kiln, and then prepared as the foundation of the Ramesside house. The area perhaps adjoined an earlier house or other type of domestic complex, which was not found. The phase included contexts [1047], [1049], [1052], [1053], [1057] to [1060], [1067], [1070-1], [1075-6], [1082], [1085-6], [1090], [2004] and [2009-2011].

Phase VI: Early New Kingdom? (Dynasty 18)
This phase comprised a large mud-brick structure and associated finds underlying the eastern side of trench. It included contexts [1064] and [1068].

Section through Excavation 1
An 8 m by 1 m trench was cut through Excavation 1, east-west across the site. The aim was to determine the depth of the water table and subsequent possibilities for excavation with dewatering equipment, as well as to investigate the stratigraphical sequence of archaeological remains at Kom Rebwa, including their depth,

configuration and date. The foundation levels of Phase VI were reached and material from the Old Kingdom was recovered from the lowest strata reached at approximately 3 m below ground level.

Drill cores were made to the east and west of the excavation trench as well as through the central area in the top of wall [1033]. A small profile of the underlying material was therefore created to give a micro-sequence of layers within the context of the larger transect sequences in Kom Rebwa and the Sais area.

Due to the nature of the area excavated, the analysis of the data concentrates on a discussion of the settlement changes over a short period of time as defined by the pottery typology and corpus. In addition, further remarks can be made about certain classes of object which are common in Kom Rebwa.

1.3 Phase I: Upper *sebakhin* layers (Figure 4)

The locus positions were given according to 2.5 by 5 m squares of the trench, although the excavated areas within the trench expanded in some directions and contracted in others, depending upon the nature of what was being excavated. The central dividing line for the loci ran north to south halfway through the trench. The locus numbers 1, 3, 5, 7 and 9 were on the eastern side of the trench, with the even numbers 2, 4, 6, 8 and 10 on the eastern side of the trench and, therefore, more prone to disturbance and redeposition.

Context [1000] was the overburden of the site, consisting of dug-over and disturbed fill or *redeem*. It covered the whole extent of the trench, although in different depths. At the eastern side of the trench, there was a layer of around 1 m of fill, while on the western side the depth of fill is around 20-30 cm, which represented dry, dusty top soil. The distribution of soil suggested that the western side of the site was relatively untouched, whereas the eastern side had been subjected to intensive digging. The pottery in the upper layer may have been partly sieved out and perhaps partly dumped during the operations of the *sebakhin*, so that the original context for most of it is not clear. Representative corpora of material with which to compare the main pottery corpus from the sealed contexts were, however, kept. The aim was to gauge whether the material was homogeneous in nature. If it were very similar the conclusion to be drawn would be that the upper layers of the excavation were also from the Phase II (TIP) settlement. If there were different types of pottery, which could not be assigned a Third Intermediate Period date, then it might be possible to gain an idea about any archaeological strata above the Third Intermediate Period layers, or to suggest that earlier material may have been dug out and

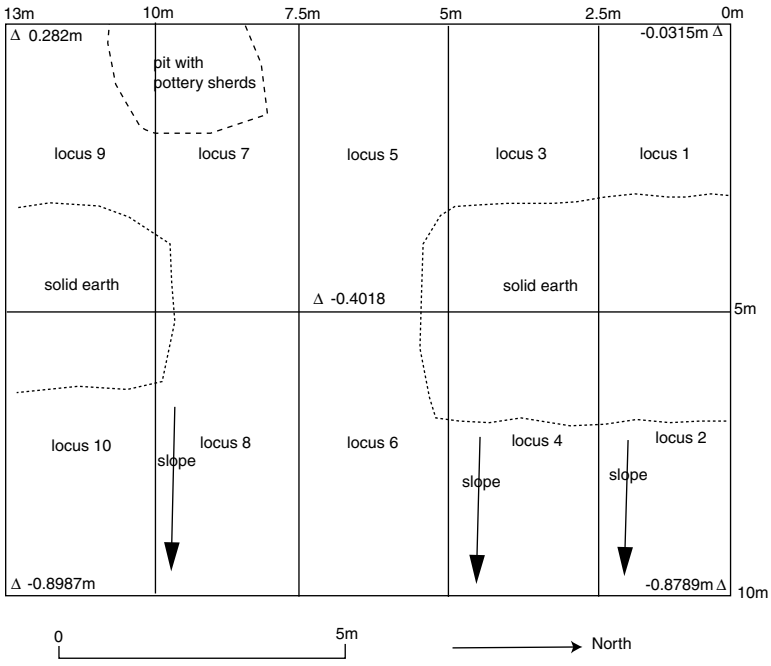


Figure 4. Sketch of locus positions in the trench.

dumped back on top of the Third Intermediate Period layers.

The objects from Stratum 1 and 2 properly belong to the [1000] context, although they may have been brought up in the digging from the deeper layers and dumped from the area to the east of the trench. Their context was not likely to be significant, but the material was recorded in order to add to the information from the other parts of the trench.

In the early stages of the excavation, the area seemed to contain two more solid earth masses at the north and south middle part of the trench, with a depression between them. The difference in height between the eastern and western side on the south was 1.18 m, sloping from west to east, and 0.85 m on the north. The trench, therefore, was effectively across the bank, with the highest part at the south-western corner and the lowest point at the south-east corner.

Objects by Locus (Table 1)

A total of 137 finds was recorded in the ten loci across the trench. The table below shows that the finds fell into particular categories: gaming pieces, pottery disks or tessons, cobra figure fragments, beads, fragments of stones and flints. There were also some stone pounders, Nile silt fragments of figurines and some mud, bone and metal fragments. A similar pattern of types of find was repeated in the overburden context [1000], making a total of 19 finds.

[1000]
S.550 Fragment of the lower part of a cobra statue.
S.155 Fragment of a base of a cobra statue.
S.156 Fragment of a base of a cobra statue.
S.157 Head of a cobra figure.
S.025 Chert pounder or hammer stone.
S.026 Brown orthoquartzite pounder or hammer stone.
S.027 Black-grey granite pounder or hammer stone.
S.287 Complete flint blade.
S.288 Fragment of flint blade or chip.
S.494 Glass spherical bead.
S.283 Faience, triple cylinder bead.
S.285 Faience bead fragment.
S.290 Flat oval glass bead.
S.276 Shell, pierced.
S.286 Small fragment of ivory.
S.320 Copper alloy fragment of tool point.
S.321 Copper alloy bead (?). D. 0.6 cm.
S.322 Copper alloy fragment, perhaps from a bowl rim, with embossed decoration

Central area
S.103 Bone pin or arrowhead fragment, with point and broken along the shaft.
S.312 Spherical glass bead, broken in two.

Distribution of the finds

It should be noted that of a total of 568 finds from Excavation 1, 156 or 27.5% were from unstratified soil deposits and were without real context. Some comments can be made on the material, however. The types of 'finds' collected across the upper strata were relatively similar. A closer analysis of the spread of the finds revealed some interesting concentrations and gaps, but they may be due to the collection of the material or to the various taphonomic processes at the site, rather than reflecting their true original disposition.

Most of the cobra statuette fragments were found in the excavation of the embankment in the Locus 2-3 area, which also takes in Locus 4. The area which is seemingly least likely to contain them is Locus 1, which is also one of the least contaminated and disturbed areas. Tessons occur in each locus, except for Locus 6, which has fewest small finds of all of the loci.

Locus 6 was, however, the find spot for fragments of a granite offering table as well as a fragment of limestone with hieroglyphs incised upon it. Next to it in Locus 5, there was also a granite basin fragment and a basalt fragment, while Locus 8 also had a fragment of a granite basin. This central area seems to have been the most likely to contain reused, smashed fragments of monumental stone. It could reflect the presence of monuments in the strata above or below the excavation level.

Gaming pieces occurred throughout the trench, although there was a concentration of them in Locus 3-5, again the least disturbed area. In Locus 4, there was a group of objects which together may have formed part of a cosmetic set. They included two copper cosmetic tools, faience beads, a grinder, a piece of pumice and

Locus 1	**Locus 2**
S.112 duck head, from bowl S.133 gaming piece S.111 Nile silt object S.110 limestone ball S.134 orthoquartzite fragment S.106, 107, 109 *tessons* S.175, 176 cobra fragments S.82 bead S.17 cobra fragment S.108 *tesson*	S.14 two beads, S.81 beads S.184 faience ring S.44, 45, 46 gaming pieces, bobbin type S.47 gaming piece, conical S.223 pebble S.224, 227 slag S.130 stone grinder fragment S.48, 113-4, 144, 222 *tessons* S.79 bead S.22, 139, 552 cobra fragments S.62 gaming piece, bobbin type S.146 Nile silt animal body S.132 stone pounder S. 145 *tesson*
Locus 3	**Locus 4**
S.153, 55, 56, 70 gaming pieces, bobbin type S.118 stone grinder S.116 red orthoquartzite fragment S.151, S.57 *tessons*	S.193 faience beads S. 173, 174 cobra fragments S.185, 186 copper fragments S.67 Nile silt duck head, from bowl S.128 pumice stone S.161 scarab S.167 shell pendants S.170 stone grinder S.75 limestone statuette fragment S.166 *tessons*
Locus 5	**Locus 6**
S.184 faience bead, S.124 bone bead S.24, 147 cobra fragment S.174 gaming piece S.152 Nile silt object S.127 pumice stone S.56 granite basin fragment, S.117 basalt fragment S.52 limestone disk S.152 limestone object S.143, 149 *tessons* S. 125 gaming piece, conical S.148 *tesson*	S.126 granite offering table fragment S.160 limestone fragment with hieroglyphs S.85 turtle shell fragment Pit: S. 197 ring bead S.169 cobra S.172 gaming piece, bobbin type S.553 cobra fragment
Locus 7	**Locus 8**
S.178, 551 cobra fragments S.179 gaming piece, bobbin type S.115 Nile silt leg of figure S.129 pebble S.140 *tesson*	S.122, 123 faience bead and ring S.120, 131 bone pin S.20, 21 cobra fragments S.163 pounder S.119 shell S.57 granite basin fragment S.150 *tesson*
Locus 9	**Locus 10**
S.254, 255, 256, 368 cobra fragments S.282 faience *wedjat*-eye S.261 faience vessel fragment; S.294 ring bead S.271, 272, 277 flint S.279, 280 bone object S.278 gaming piece S.266 mud ring S.281 Nile silt bird head S.273 pebble S.270 stone bowl rim S.262 limestone stamp S.262 stone pounder S.267 *tessons*	S.257, 258, 347, 372 cobra fragments S. 374 faience fragments S.295, 296, 298, 299, 301 faience beads S.297 faience amulet fragment S.373 gaming piece, conical S.302, 308, 309, 310, 311, 318, 319 glass beads S.376 loom weight S.352 stone grinder S.375 *tessons*

Table 1. Objects by locus.

shell pendants, as well as a scarab in the pit in this locus. In Locus 10, a set of faience beads and pendant (7) as well as glass beads (7) suggest that they came from a necklace.

The finds from the general context [1000] continued to support the identification of a feature connected to the cobra figures (building context or kiln), as well as a cosmetic set (copper objects, beads and pendants). In addition, the number of pounders and grinders in this upper layer is also noteworthy in Locus 2-4, 8-10 and generally in [1000]. They could be remnants of objects used to pound some of the stone objects into smaller pieces during the destruction phases of the site.

Other finds in the upper strata confirmed the fact that they consisted of disturbed layers of earth. A dog skeleton was found in the central north section of the excavation and it seemed likely that the animal had died there sometime soon after the *sebakhin* digging, perhaps after it had crawled into a hole in the small piles of earth left by the digging.

The way in which the redeposited earth had been left suggested that there may have been two mounds at the northern and southern side of the trench left by the *sebakhin*. They were still visible in the topography of the site and formed two natural 'hills' in the trench.

Eastern Side of the Trench

As the excavation of the whole trench proceeded, it became clear that the upper levels had been destroyed and that the eastern side of the trench had been removed by the *sebakhin*. There were also some more unusual traces in the north-east part of the trench and they may represent ancient activity at the site or have been left by the sebakhin. It appeared as if the upper levels had been removed, leaving behind a dusty 'ground level' which had cut through the buildings at the top of the stratigraphic sequence. This level was characterised by large vessels lying upon the ground surface, including a large jar fragment in the north-eastern corner. The jar fragment had probably been extracted from the upper levels of fill during the removal of the *sebakh* and thrown back down onto the working level, 80 cm below the modern ground level, as it was too large to be of any use.

The north-eastern floor level also contained several depressions or small pits [2005] (Figure 5), with further evidence for the destruction of some of the upper strata.

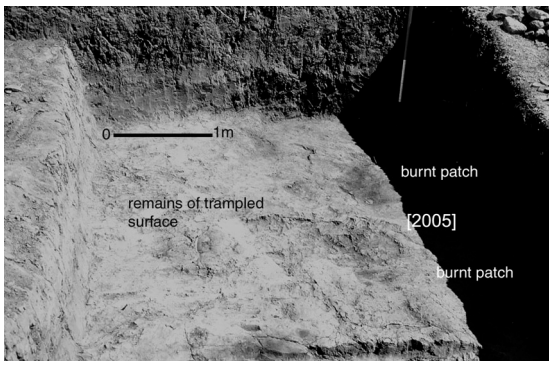


Figure 5. North-east corner showing burnt areas and surface.

One of the depressions was full of burnt material, coloured black and brown, with tiny fragments of gold foil mixed in with it (Cotton, Appendix 6: 1.1). A few of the gold fragments were attached to what looked like either charred wood, or, more likely, charred cartonnage (that is, cloth and plaster). It is likely that the original object had been set on fire in order to allow the gold to melt and form beads, so that robbers could remove it from coffins or furniture. The foil or paint was, however, so fine that in the case of the small pit, the gold had not combined to form larger droplets. Analysis of the gold (S.083) showed that it had a thickness of less than 1 micron and could only be measured and seen in some cases under a microscope, implying that it was more likely to have been painted onto the surface of an object. A fragment of a faience ring bezel was also found here, with an image of a female deity upon it, standing, holding a *wadj*-sceptre and perhaps meant to represent Sakhmet or Wadjyt (S.084).

A little further to the west (in Locus 2 and at the new floor level) was a second pit feature [2006], which contained a number of flints and a large quantity of debitage (Table 2). In all, there were 49 flint chips and flakes made from light brown chert with a white cortex, the majority of which seemed to have been chipped from core pieces, although no cores were found with the material. There were only a few tools amongst the flint, although, as the find was near the northern section, it is possible that further material lies in the unexcavated section. The flint may have been worked in the place in which it

was found, as there was a large central concentration of flint debitage, with a smaller scatter-zone around it of a few further flakes.

Stratum 6, Locus 2 Flint Debitage	**Number**	**Weight**
Chips/chunks	13	19g
Primary flakes	9	28g
Primary blades	3	4g
Secondary flakes	20	37g
Secondary blades	1	2g
Cores	0	-
Tools	3	18g
Total	49	100g

Table 2. Flint debitage from [2006].

The tools comprised a blade tool L.9 and two sickle blade fragments L.10 and L11. They seem to have been associated with the primary underlying buildings, as they have a domestic function, rather than with the later *sebakhin*. The layer may then be a 'real' layer which had not been disturbed by the sebakhin and which is associated with the Phase II buildings.

One of the group of pits also contained a fragment of a very damaged and fragile scarab (S.161), which had the motto *Mn-ḫpr-m3ʿt* inscribed on the base (Locus 4).

The remainder of the eastern side of the trench had been very disturbed, with broken pottery lying in groups in one or two places, as if it had been thrown down during the *sebakhin* excavations. There were also groups of broken sherds in patches, with hard and soft mud on the surface of what may have been the level to which the *sebakhin* had dug. They had then trampled sherds into the floor (Figure 6).

To the south of the trench in the corner area, the *sebakhin* had again cut through most of the upper layers into the strata relating to the Ramesside period house underneath. Material which was not needed by the *sebakhin* was discarded onto the surface and left. These objects will be described in the appropriate sections, as they can be related to the archaeological features in most cases.



Figure 6. Trampled pottery and disturbed surfaces, east side of the trench.

It was noticeable that in the fill on the eastern side of the trench there was a number of fragments of objects which seem to have come from hard stone objects, perhaps from a different period than the preserved archaeological layers. These included two joining pieces of a black granite offering table (S.126), which may have been an individual offering table or part of a sculpture of an offering bearer. There was also a fragment of a black granite basin (S.056) and a fragment of limestone with remains of hieroglyphs (S.160). Although none of these objects could be dated with any certainty, hard stone offering-bearer figures are known from the New Kingdom onward, while granite basins occur at all periods and there was not enough of the hieroglyphic inscription to be certain of its nature. The fact that it consisted mostly of a '*di*' sign could, very tentatively, suggest that it is part of a *ḥtp-di-nsw* formula.

Aside from these finds, the most noticeable aspect of the material was that it was extremely homogeneous in type and date and was most likely not to be of Saite date. The Saite remains, which once lay above this phase, had therefore been thoroughly removed.

Pottery

The pottery found in the upper levels formed the basis for a good typology from the Late New Kingdom-Third Intermediate Period. A very few pieces may be dated to later than this period and there were residual fragments of Old Kingdom sherds, as well as some other periods, which were more difficult to identify. There were some groups of pottery that were found lying directly on top of undisturbed archaeological contexts. It

seemed that the pottery had been found in the digging by the *sebakhin* and was thrown back onto the contemporary ground level in small piles (Figure 7). Most of the sherds from [2002] and [2007] seemed to have been treated in this manner.



Figure 7. [2007] view south with P.16 bowl rims and P.1 jar-stand on top of brickwork.

Similarly, in the south-west corner of the trench [1016] there was a heap of smashed pottery. The material was probably not an archaeological deposit as such, but was more likely to have been caused by the *sebakhin* digging in this area. They must have found and discarded a large number of sherds amongst the mud-brick or the sherds were sieved out of the mud-brick to ensure that the *sebakh* taken away was as free from large pieces of pottery as possible.

Extent of the sebakhin digging

As the excavation continued, it became clear that the overburden in the eastern two-thirds of the trench was a product of *sebakhin* digging. They had stripped away material from the upper layers of the site, down to the modern ground level in Kom Rebwa, which must have included anything dating to later than the Third Intermediate Period. In this particular area they had begun to cut into the lower layers, by digging northward from the path to create a roughly rectangular trench. Then they had begun to attack the *sebakh* by digging to the west and eastern side of their first trench. The line at which they had stopped their digging was clearly visible in the trench of Excavation 1, running about halfway across it from north to south. The line was made visible due to a thin line of white powder, perhaps caused by some organic substance coating the cleared area, such as reeds or straw. Once this had degraded into powder, more earth was thrown back over it and the trench abandoned until the modern excavations. It was likely that during the digging, the two standing door jambs from Phase III were uncovered and perhaps the door lintel of the Late Ramesside house. They may have had a covering of mud brick or have fallen down prior to Phase II. The upper half of the western door jamb had been removed, along with the lintel, and the eastern jamb had fallen over into the excavated area of the trench. The *sebakhin* digging had taken away the eastern part of Room 1, perhaps a doorway leading away from it, as well as a column base for the portico roof of the main room.

1.4 Summary

The material from the western side of Excavation 1 provides a last link to the Third Intermediate Period remains at the site. Almost all of the phases in the western side were built upon pre-existing walls or structures. The new buildings made the most of the strong foundations and orientations of the buildings. This may imply that the people living here were poorer inhabitants who took advantage of the ruins of a Late Ramesside town. The hearths and ovens associated with this later occupation suggest a domestic context existing for a short period of time. The hearths in the area do not seem to have been built up to a great degree, suggesting that whatever was built on top of the area happened within a generation of the founding of the small, poor houses

Chapter 2

Phase II and Phase II-III

2.1 Phase II: Third Intermediate Period Domestic Structures. (Figure 8)

This phase comprises contexts [1001] to [1012], [1014], [1016] and [1018]. The phase was preserved best on the western side of the trench but had been affected by *sebakhin* digging at the surface and to the east, where all traces of this upper layer had been removed. The settlement sequence in Excavation 1, however, does seem to show the early stages of development of the town over a period of time before Dynasty 26, when Sais was established as the capital city.

The exact dating of the ephemeral town site remains is difficult due to the lack of distinction of the pottery, the admixture of material from below and the practice of reusing both broken pottery to make mud bricks for the later site and the disturbance of the upper layers by the actions of *sebakhin*. The broad time frame for the later town site can be established based mainly upon existing pottery comparators, mainly from the Qantir pottery corpus.

The structural remains for this phase comprise a rectangular structure with a circular feature [1012]. The rectangle had three distinct walls: a wall made up of sandy bricks at the westernmost side lying from south east to north west [1006]. The wall seemed to have existed in earlier phases and been rebuilt successively for reuse in the different phases of the building. This wall joined with two other walls running at right angles to it; [1017] at the south end and [1007] at the north end, which continued to form the western wall of the rectangle. The walls were not bonded but [1017] and [1007] were built against [1006]. [1007] also continued through several phases, but in the last preserved phase it was only of 1-2 bricks in thickness and was clearly built on top of earlier material, including pottery fill.

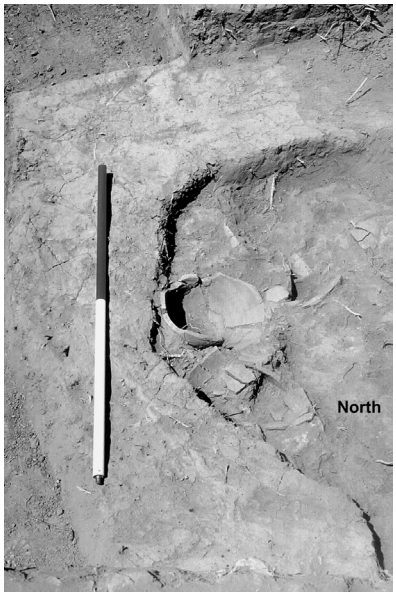


Figure 9. Pottery above Oven 1 [1012].

To the south the rectangular structure contained the base of a circular feature [1012] (Figure 9), designated as Oven 1, with an entrance in the eastern side and this oven was built against and over a second, larger oven, Oven 2 [1013].

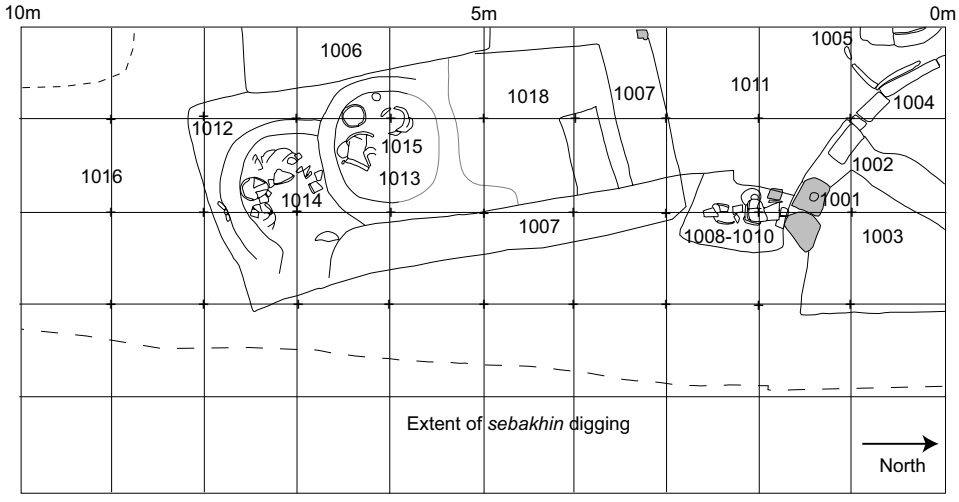


Figure 8. Plan of Phase II structures.

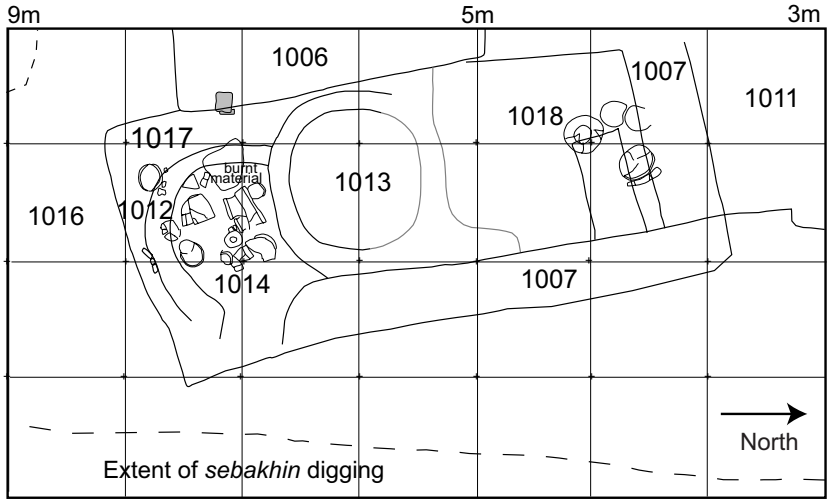


Figure 10. Plan of rectangular structure, with second layer of pottery in Oven 1.

Oven 2 had in turn been built upon an earlier oven and seemed to be oriented along the underlying walls, perhaps to add strength to the upper structure (Figure 10). Oven 2 was also closely connected to the wall [1017]. Both ovens contained large amounts of pottery in particular (Figure 11), 46% were bowls, of different kinds, some of which have now been reconstructed. The remainder were necked jars, globular jars, four cups with ridged bases (the highest proportion anywhere on the site), 3 fragments of bread moulds, 3 thick walled amphora or storage jar bases and 2 fragments of large coarseware stands or fittings.



Figure 11. Oven 1, [1012] with top layer of pottery.

Oven 1 also contained two fragments of stone: one limestone block and one granite fragment, which may have been used in the oven as pot or plate stands. There were also a number of bread plate fragments in the upper strata of the ovens. There was a small patch of burnt material in the base of Oven 1, suggesting that this was the bottom of a once more substantial structure, which had been built after Oven 2, perhaps when the latter had gone out of use, or had become impractical to use. In fact, Oven 2 proved to be the main feature of the underlying house, that seemed to have survived into the later phase because of its substantial nature.

In the north-western corner of the small room created by the configuration of the walls, [1018], there was a cluster of bowls and vessels in an enclosed mud-brick 'cupboard' (Figure 13). All of the material seemed to be related, both structurally and functionally. The vessels comprised a bowl with internal ledge (P.226), three necked jar rims (P.14, 17 and 302) and a funnel necked jar rim (P.33). The latter had traces of burning, suggesting that the mud feature was a shelf where hot vessels from the oven could be placed.



Figure 12. Mud feature in [1018].

The other main features of Phase II were a hearth in the north western section [1005], at the level of the walled area, and part of an apparently circular structure, with a cross-wall running into the northern section [1002] and [1004]. The structure was made from sandy-yellow bricks, so that the curve of the wall was clear. Following the curve of the wall, the diameter of a completely circular structure would have been between 5.5 and 6 metres, making it fairly substantial in nature. A circular structure of this diameter should have come back around into the section of the trench approximately 3 metres from the north-eastern corner. The area had been so disturbed, however, that no traces of the wall were visible. Even if it were only a semi-circular building, the remainder of the wall would be under the north-western section and it may still have had a total width of up to 6 metres. The bricks of [1004] were 36 x 21 x 10 cm in size. The cross wall [1002] was made of browner, mud bricks, which lay against the sandy wall, rather than being bonded with it. This wall clearly belonged to Phase II as it had been built separately and when it was removed the structures of Phase II-III were uncovered. The doorway of the building was marked by a pivot stone, made from a reused limestone block, set into the wall [1001]. A second reused block of limestone lying next to the pivot may have been intended as the threshold entrance of the building or room. The total width of this threshold, around 50 cm, may have been too narrow for a human entrance and perhaps implies that the structure was either a store-house or animal pen.

To the south, outside the doorway, there was a pile of pottery of which some jar bases still contained substantial amounts of chaff perhaps from dried and partly decomposed manure [1008, 1009, 1010] (Figure 14). The dump covered an area of around 1.2 metres by 1.3 metres and was an average of 12 cm deep. The pile of sherds included: two handles, three tessons, eighty-five sherds from bowls and necked amphorae, ten small fragments of coarseware bread plates and four hundred and forty body sherds. The main diagnostic sherds were bowl rims of all the main types, as well as necked storage jar rims. Samples of the deposit [1009] were dominated by charred wheat glume bases. This almost certainly represents a deposit of



Figure 13. Door pivot and block [1001] and rubbish dump [1008-1010].

charred material cleaned out of a domestic oven/ hearth, in which cereal processing waste was used as the primary fuel (Malleson, Appendix 6: 2.4). Samples of contexts [1008] and [1010] contained little charred material and may well have been waste of another kind (Cotton, Appendix 6: 1.1). The pottery seemed to have been used to collect waste material from inside the building, which was then dumped just outside the building door. The pottery had been thrown upon a surface at the base of the pivot stone for the door to the small circular building. The presence of the broken sherds may imply that they were used in some way inside the animal pen, perhaps to cover the floor. If the building in question was some kind of animal pen, then the circular shape may have been typical as well as the dividing cross-wall of the structure. It could have formed pens for individual animals. There would have been limited but adequate space between the northern building and the ovens to the south, for people to move between them.

The pivot and threshold stones had been placed upon earlier layers of the chaff and mud material, suggesting that the threshold had been renovated when it became too buried underneath waste. There may have been several successive phases of the waste pile and the threshold. Layer [1009] containing organics and pottery lay underneath a mud layer outside the building and ran underneath the limestone threshold, suggesting that the refurbishment of the building and doorway had happened in Phase II and that the dumping of waste also belonged to this phase, when the north-western corner was used for the circular building.

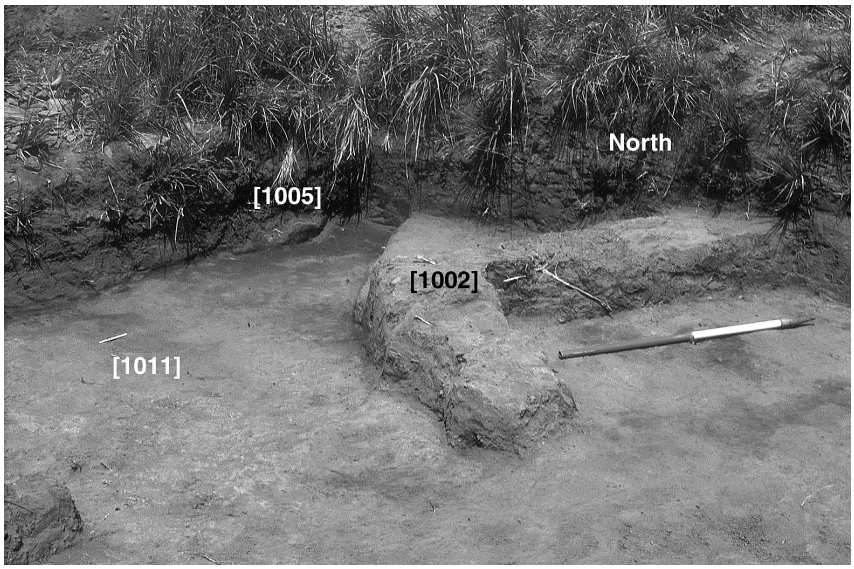


Figure 14. North-west corner of the trench, showing base of circular structure and hearth [1005].

Inside the circular building there was a floor level between the main wall [1002] and the cross wall [1004], beyond the threshold. The small area seemed to contain mainly small pieces of pottery within a soil matrix [1003] which was slightly greasy in nature, mixed with chaff and signs of burning.

The burnt hearth in the section [1005] could only be partially seen and recorded, as the remainder of it was in the section, but it may have been a multi-phase hearth, with one built on top of another (Figure 14). Some large fragments of burnt Nile silt were found in it and they formed part of a domed structure for this oven or hearth. The inside of the oven had been burnt and had fired orange in colour with a black core, creating a typical oven-lining, while the mud coating or basic wall outside it had maintained the integrity of the oven's shape.

To the south of the hearth and abutting the chaff waste pile, there was a series of colour changes in the soil, with a layer of clay lying against [1007 north] and a patch of chaff and burning in the centre of it. The area may have been connected with the hearth or with another feature further to the west that remains unexcavated.

Finds

Small finds from the upper contexts of the phase were minimal, but included a cowroid carnelian bead (S.315), with incised star on the back, and the upper body of a faience scarab (S.316), both perhaps from the fill. Within the fabric of the wall [1007], a body and head of a cobra figure was found (S.164-5), seemingly having been embedded within the mud-bricks of the wall. The oven [1012] seemed to contain only some residual material, including an Old Kingdom sherd (S.066) and a limestone gaming piece (or stopper) (S.177). More small finds came from within the structures themselves, in particular in [1018]. They included fragments of limestone, which could have been used as sharpeners (S.181-2), a limestone grinder (S.162) and a worn piece of sandstone, also a grinder or smoother (S.250). Most interesting was a group of nine flint blade tools found on top of a mud patch, having perhaps been worked in this area (S.500). The tools included four sickle blades, one unfinished tool, three double-edged blades and two scrapers. A further flint found in [1018] seems to have been a sickle blade reused as a borer, then lost in the kiln and subsequently discarded in ash removed from the kiln as it was burnt white and found amongst the pink ash removed from the kiln (S.231). Two fragments of a copper alloy spatula were also found here (S.105) confirming the domestic workshop nature of the structure. A cobra body fragment (S.171) and a cockle shell with perforation for suspension (S.535) could have been residual. Almost certainly from earlier levels was the spout of a small vessel (S.554) made from pale orange clay and another (1018, P.15)

from a Mycenaean vessel, which may have been embedded in the mud brick or flooring.

More intriguing than the imported and residual pottery was the material used for a whetstone (S.259) found in the [1016-1021] context. It was a hard, relatively heavy stone with many reflective particles or crystals and white and dark crystalline line patterns. Tentatively identified as made from fluorspar, the object had smoothed surfaces and was shaped like a blade with one thick edge tapering to a narrow edge and a slightly convex leading blade. The object may have been reused from an earlier knife or cutting blade. It was broken diagonally through the body and chipped at the leading edge. A leg from a vessel made from fired silt with whole shell inclusions (S.265) was also found in this area.

2.2 Phase II-III: Transition phase between later TIP layers and earlier Ramesside house.

Oven 3 and Surround

The features in the north of the trench, comprising the circular building in Phase II, were removed and the underlying features, which seemed to be contemporary with Phase III were excavated (Figure 15). Once the cross-wall [1002] and the top courses of the circular structure was removed, a more substantial wall [1004] was uncovered. The bricks had been laid side by side on the straight section and then two stretchers side by side were used for the curved section, creating a much stronger structure than the later one. Only part of the whole structure was excavated with the remainder underneath the north-western section. At the eastern end, there was a more substantial wall [1024], which may have belonged to another house running to the north of the trench.

Oven 3 [1036], however, lay in quite a high position relative to the other Phase III structures, but it did not seem to belong to Phase II. The top of [1036] was at 3.3232 m asl. (45), and the base of [1036] was at 2.8613 m asl (47), whereas the floor level of the courtyard in Phase III [1041] was at 2.3355 m asl (90), a difference of some 52.6 cm. The threshold of Room 2 [1031] was at 2.2489 m asl (33). The difference could be accounted for by the higher elevation of the underlying topography at the northern end of the trench or because of different uses of the area. It is possible that the original base of Oven 3 was constructed at sometime during the life of the Ramesside house, because of the lack of use of the Room 2 (see below) or just after the house had fallen out of use. Oven 3 continued in use with the house in full operation, but after the collapse of the roof of the house, then Oven 3 continued in use and formed the base for the substantial structure in later times. It therefore provided a link between the lower house phase and the upper ephemeral buildings after the end of the life of the house. In a sense, it provides an intermediate, linking phase, evident from the level map of the site.

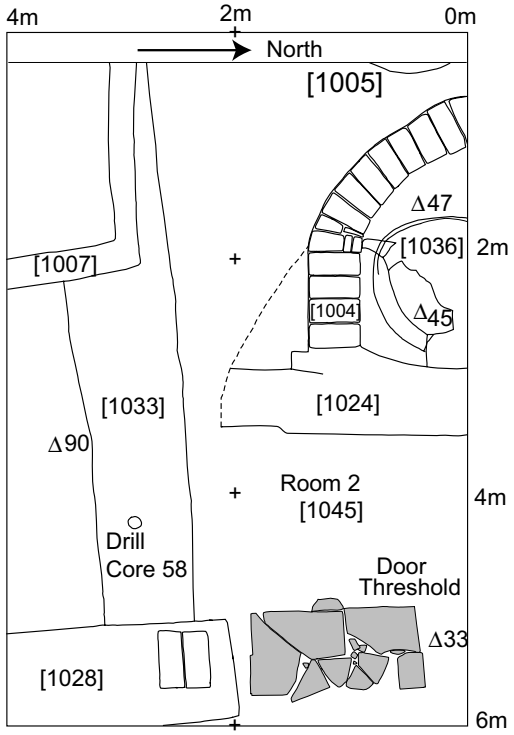


Figure 15. Plan of Oven 3 [1036] and earlier phases for comparison.

The wall [1024] did not seem to extend all the way to the south and join [1033] creating a small hallway for Room 2, but there may have been access past Oven 3 to the west. It was difficult to detect the brickwork in this wall. There were some sandy bricks, but the impression was that the wall did not extend beyond the depth of the oven itself and, therefore, was built upon fill already inside Room 2. This fact suggested that the oven had been built directly after Room 2 had fallen out of use.



Figure 16. Oven 3 [1036], plan view, showing brickwork and fired mud oven.

Oven 3 had been made in stages, with the original oven perhaps embedded into the corner of a set of walls, or with a semi-circular shape set against a mud bank rather than a formal wall. The body of the oven was domed. As the inside of the oven was fired, it was refurbished with a new mud envelope on the outside and then, once that was fired, further mud was placed over the outside to maintain the strength of the oven and also perhaps to retain heat. Oven 3 seemed to have grown to fit the mud-brick surround so by the time it fell out of use it completely filled the structure, both with its walls and with ash from the oven (Figure 16). It would have stood about 55 cm from the bottom of its enclosure and the diameter of the oven itself can be estimated at 96 cm. The opening for stoking the oven was not apparent, unless it was a gap on the western side which continued into the section or, alternatively, it may have been a top-loading oven. The fill outside the western side of the oven contained burnt material and burnt mud, which was built over by a later wall. The base of the oven surround was made of sticky black mud, about 45 cm down from the top of the existing wall. The upper layers of ash consisted of pink, chaff material [1003], similar to that associated with Oven 2. Lower in the oven surround, the earlier layers of ash were white in colour [1037] and may represent the fact that different types of fuel were used for the ovens. The upper oven had been built over the white ashy material. In order to prepare the oven for the later structure, muddy bricks [1038] were dumped inside the oven over [1037] and then the cross-wall [1002] running north-north-west was built on top of it.

The ashy material did not contain as much pottery as might have been expected, but there were a few sherds, pieces of burnt bone and a vitrified animal tooth from the oven itself (S.203). The mud fill layer [1038] contained fragments of a bowl rim, made from a hard, dense ware, with a red-slipped interior (P.57), a bowl with a ledged rim with light orange slip (P.54) and two carinated bowl rims, one with a red painted rim (P.55 and 1). There were two rim fragments from a globular jar (P.53 and 56), perhaps from the same vessel, covered with light orange slip on the outside and over onto the inside of the rim. There was also a straight, short-necked jar rim, which was very burnt (P.52), and a beer jar base with a pre-fired hole (P.58). Although not very distinctive, they form part of the usual corpus expected, given the domestic nature of the site. Context [1037] was very poor in diagnostic pottery remains, although there was a rim of a bowl with an internal ledge and a bread mould base. The latter is interesting as it may confirm that such ovens could also be used for the cooking of bread in these moulds.

An environmental sample was taken from the oven-related context [1037]. Although a large sample was taken (2250 ml), after analysis it proved to have a low 'seeds per ml of sample' count. The charred plant remains in the sample consisted mainly of very fragmented wood charcoal, seed fragments which had been heavily damaged by charring and other unidentifiable seed fragments. The identifiable plant remains

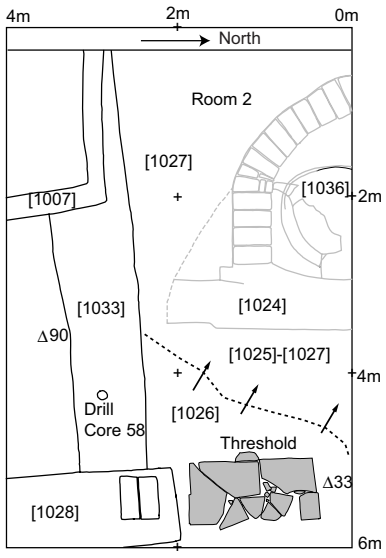


Figure 17. Plan with location of upper fill from Oven 3.

consisted principally of wheat glume bases and an unusually high count of Trifoliae (clover) family seeds (Malleson, Appendix 6: 2.4). The wood fragments may have come from small, brush-wood bushes used to fire the oven.

It also seemed that burnt and ashy material had been removed from Oven 3, thrown over its surrounding wall and dumped. It comprised a muddy fill [1025 and 1026] and a pink ashy fill [1027] (Figure 17).

The muddy fill [1025] was of particular interest since it was very dark brown in colour and almost black in places, similar to the fill inside the Oven 3. It seems likely that some of the burnt material from Oven 3 had been thrown out over the wall and into the area of Room 2, suggesting that Room 2 was already out of use (Figure 18).

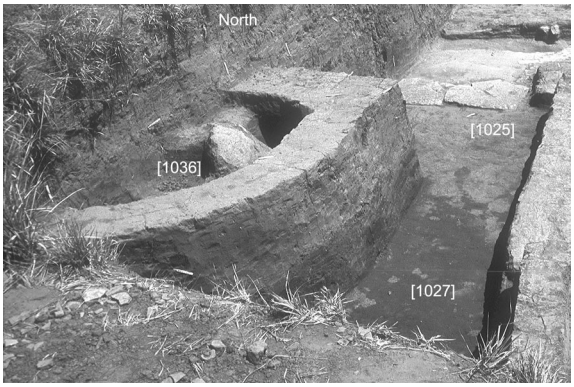


Figure 18. Upper fill to the east of Oven 3.

An environmental sample from [1025] proved to be one of the richer and more diverse samples from Excavation 1. The charred plant remains were again dominated by wheat chaff elements, with some weed seeds. The sample also contained six lentils and the only grape seed identified in the excavation area, so it is possible that the material used as fuel in the oven consisted of other food and wine processing waste as well as cereals. The sample material contained no animal or fish bone, but it did contain pot sherds and slag-like material (Malleson, Report 2007: 3).

Layer [1026] was similar to [1025], although less dark in colour. It is likely, therefore, that they were basically the same context, although perhaps with charred material thrown out onto [1025]. Both of the fill layers [1025] and [1026] contained many fragments of pottery, including everted bowl rims, bowls with modelled rim and carinated bowl rims. There were also two footed bowl bases, otherwise quite rare from Excavation 1. There were neckless jar rims, as well as necked jar rims and globular jar rims and an imported flask or amphora neck and rim (1026, P.3), with a body sherd perhaps of the same flask in [1025]. There were also coarseware fragments from pot-stands and one distinctive stand or basin (1026, P.65 and 1025, P.8).

Amongst the small finds from the fill layers there was a number of grindstones made of orthoquartzite. Two stones with flat sides were found in [1025] and a small rubber and a larger grinder in [1026]. The latter had been worked from an object originally inscribed with hieroglyphs (S.188) of which a few signs were legible. It is possible the grindstones were used together, but, if so, the small scale of the stones suggests that this was not a process such as wheat or barley grinding, but for spices, dried leaves or perhaps pigment-bearing ores. The hieroglyphs may have given extra 'power' to the substance being ground and so perhaps the substance could have been for medicinal purposes. Alternatively, the granular nature of the orthoquarzite may have been the more practical reason behind the choice of the material. In addition, there was a piece of pumice stone (S.207) and a *tesson* (S.213), both from [1026], again perhaps for smoothing or grinding purposes.

The succeeding fill [1027] contained a rubbish pit and abutted the increasingly mud-brick fill of [1026] to the south, which made the edge of the wall [1024] difficult to follow. [1027] contained a small complete bowl (P.1) and the rest of the pottery comprised mainly bowl fragments and fragments of some large storage jar vessels, both neckless and necked, as well as a rounded base of a bottle, an uncommon type for Excavation 1. The main feature of interest concerning [1027] was that it was pink in colour and of a very loose texture. This suggested that it was burnt, ashy material, which had been discarded from an oven or fire, perhaps from Oven 3. It seemed to confirm that with Room 2 unused, Oven 3 was built in its former space and material from the oven was thrown out back onto the top of fallen brickwork and fill in the room.

The use of this area as a rubbish dump for the oven was confirmed by the animal bones found here. There was a rich variety of bones, presumably mostly from animals consumed as

food. The most numerous were bird bones, which could not be identified to species level, although in other contexts ducks are more common (Appendix 7). Sheep/goat, pig and cattle bones were all present, as well as an equid bone, although it was not clear if it was from a donkey or horse. There were also some shells from river sources. The sheep/goat bones and one of the bird bones seemed to have been directly burnt, perhaps from cooking in a fire or from being used as fuel.

2.3 Summary

Phase II represents an ephemeral set of domestic structures, with an oven and area for keeping animals. Phase II-III, on the other hand, was a transitional use of this area, between the house in Phase III and the less robust structures in Phase II. Oven 3 seems to have been refurbished several times and the solid construction of the surround was made to protect the domed oven inside it. Oven 3 could have been intensively used for a short period of time. It is likely to have been connected with other structures to the north of Excavation 1.

Chapter 3

Phase III: House of Dynasty 20

3.1 Introduction

The house phase contained parts of perhaps two houses, both of which were partially excavated. The first house consisted of several rooms and features, firstly, an area designated as the courtyard because it seemed to have a back wall with no entrance or exit. Attached to it on the west was an oven or kitchen area. At the southern side of the courtyard there was a main doorway, with stone door jambs and perhaps once a lintel, which gave access to the main room (Room 1), with a raised dais and a storage annexe to the west. To the north of the courtyard, there was a room with a stone threshold, Room 2, which may have been part of another house-unit. The trench was extended to the south by 2.5 metres, in order to excavate the whole of Room 1, so that the total excavation area was 10 m (east to west) by 12.5 m (north to south) (Figure 19).



Figure 19. Extension to the south of the trench. Upper levels of fill.

The *sebakhin* digging had affected the eastern side of Room 1 and anything lying to the east of the house and courtyard. It seems that part of the structures here had been found by the *sebakhin*, including door jambs from a room on the eastern side of Room 1, as well as the door jambs of the main entrance of Room 1. The eastern jamb had been toppled and was lying in a pit left by the *sebakhin*. The lower part of the western jamb was still *in situ* (Figure 20). Despite the fact that it was not possible to clear the whole of the floor area of Room 1 because it had been disturbed, a good deal of material survived to give an idea of the circumstances of its abandonment.

The upper, collapsed layers of the houses, including roofing material and the upper parts of mud-brick walls, constituted the fill above and on top of the walls and floor levels.

3.2 The Courtyard (Figure 21)

Contexts: [1029], [1019] overburden, walls [1033], [1028], [1007], [1039], fill [1020], [1034], pottery groups [1035], [1040] and floor of the courtyard [1041].

The fill over the courtyard was designated as overburden [1029] and seemed to consist of decayed mud brick, being brown-grey in colour and crumbly in texture, but compact in places, perhaps suggesting that it came from fallen mud-brick material (Figures 20 and 21). It covered the area of Locus 1-3, lying over the courtyard and Room 2 to the north. The mud-brick fill may have come from the collapse of roofing or of the walls surrounding these two features. This is the kind of material for which the *sebakhin* would have been digging in the first place, but at this part of the trench it did seem to have been undisturbed and suggested an ancient collapse.



Figure 20. Unexcavated fill above the Courtyard.



Figure 21. Fill, partly excavated.



Figure 22. Plan of the layout of the Late Ramesside House, Phase III with main contexts.

The pottery from context [1029] was representative of the material from the whole of Phase III and compared very well with the Oven 2 material. There was a good range of bowls with straight and everted rims, internal-ridged, deep bowls and carinated bowls. There were large, necked storage jars, beer jar necks and bases, the handles from a Canaanite amphora (1029, P.11 and P.12), an amphora neck and globular jars. There were also fragments of bread moulds and coarsewares, including large platters, basins and bread plates. As the pottery was in the fill overlying the true courtyard area, it was difficult to tell whether the pottery was from the courtyard context or whether the pottery fragments had fallen in from above. It is likely that some of the pottery had been embedded in the mud-brick of the courtyard walls and had fallen out when the walls had collapsed.

Similarly, the small finds in the fill [1029] seemed to be a combination of redistributed rubbish and possible *in situ* material from Phase II. There were three cobra statuette fragments, including the fragment of the upper right hand side of the body and head of a cobra figure (S.233), a fragment of a cobra base (S.234), a fragment of the lower part of a cobra figure (S.246), a fragment of a pink Nile silt ware disk bead (S.190) and a fragment of a blue, glazed faience object with moulded raised lines on one side and a flat back (S.192). It was not clear whether these objects were contemporary with Phase III or not. A fragment of limestone (S.200) had been originally inscribed with hieroglyphs, but only one sign remained. The stone was almost certainly reworked to create a hammer or chisel stone with one pointed end and a flatter end. There were other functional objects, such as a flint sickle blade (S.202) and a flint with a serrated edge (S.204). A *tesson* (S.245) and a piece of slag completed the range of finds.

At the southern end of the Courtyard area, the brick-fall material [1019] and [1020] contained some white decayed plant remains, such as might have come from a collapsed wall for a roof made of mud and reeds bonded together. [1019] was much sandier in nature and was concentrated in front of the standing door jamb of Room 1. It is possible that it had come from a sandy-brick structure or part of one of the walls [1039] or [1028] or perhaps from a sandy mud used to bond the roofing material. [1020] lay underneath [1019] and seemed to be the immediate fallen brick material lying upon the floor of the Courtyard. It was dark brown-grey in colour and had a more 'greasy' texture than the crumbly fill above, perhaps suggesting a higher content of decayed organics or finer silt-mud material. It could therefore have been the interface layer between the last use of the Courtyard and subsequent appearance of rubbish and fill from abandonment. Few objects or pottery fragments were found in this fill context; perhaps the material used to make the roofing or collapsed mud-brick had contained fewer residual objects than in other contexts. It may also have been because the courtyard itself was not a 'living' space, but a working area, with many different functions and was kept constantly cleared between functions, therefore there was less likelihood of objects being left here and forgotten.



Figure 23. Upper floor levels of the Courtyard.

Closer to the floor levels of the courtyard (Figures 22 and 23), several storage containers were found in place in the south-west [1040] and north-east [1035] corners of the yard. The two groups seemed quite distinct, with the south-western group lying very close to the large Oven 2 [1013]. This group [1040] comprised the top of a large closed vessel (1035/40, P.7) lying on top of a bowl (P.5), an amphora (P.4) and an ovoid-bodied, neckless storage jar (P.6) lying next to a large piece of limestone (Figure 24). They may have originally been placed in a group, but the roughly cuboid stone lying upon the fragments of 1040, P.4 seemed to have been smashed the pottery vessels into many fragments. 1040, P.4 did not seem to have had a base, so it may have been reused and set into the ground to hold dry material, such as fodder or hay. Samples of the

contents from 1040, P.6 were analysed and it contained some fish bones as well as small to moderate quantities of charred cereal chaff, possibly fuel waste (Cotton, Appendix 6: 1.7).

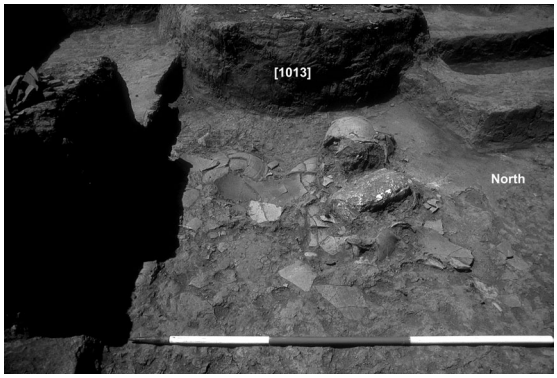


Figure 24. South-west corner [1040] pottery.

The pottery in the north-east corner, [1035], was dominated by the base of the huge storage jar, the upper part of which was found in the south-western corner (1035/40, P.7) (Figure 25). It had a diameter of 36 cm and the vessel stood up to 88 cm in height. It seemed to have been set into the ground and fitted snugly into the corner, as if it had been carefully embedded in this position. This would have been the normal position for a water jar, but the jar type is more likely to have been for general storage of foodstuffs, reused later as a water jar.

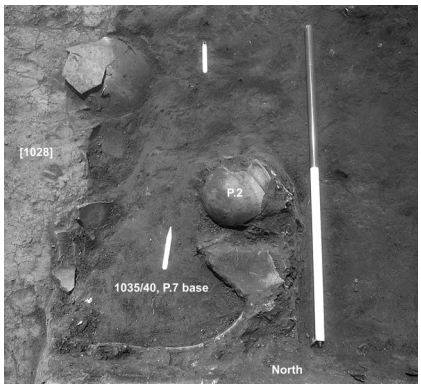


Figure 25. North-east corner of the courtyard, [1035].

The reason why the vessel was found in two parts in the different corners of the courtyard was not clear, but may be connected with the apparent deliberate smashing of the south-western corner vessels. Body sherds from the large vessel were lying against the wall to the east and fragments from it were actually upon the wall. This suggested that the wall may have been dismantled and the jar broken at about the same time. Alternatively, the wall may always have been low and acted as a stand for the lower part of the vessel. Fragments of bowls were also found in the north-east corner of the courtyard.

The eastern wall [1028] was approximately 0.9 metres in width and, as noted above, may have been dismantled or never had been very high. There had been a possible entrance on the south-eastern side. There were, however, no door jambs or lintel or door pivot and so the opening would close to floor level, without a step down or threshold. The difference in the wall level may have been due to constructional features in that the wall was built in sections of brickwork. It was not clear whether this section of the wall provided an entrance into the courtyard but there was no other obvious way into the courtyard area. The northern part of [1028] included sandy bricks at the end points of the wall construction. Two very clear bricks at the 'entrance' point may have been deliberately included in this position. To complicate matters, the southern continuation of [1028] had been disturbed by the *sebakhin* digging from above and they had penetrated through this phase in the south-eastern corner of the trench to the phase below, so that it was not possible to trace the wall further southward.



Figure 26. Wall [1033] as first differentiated from brick collapse and fill.

The north wall of the courtyard [1033] was, however, a more substantial structure, between 0.9 and 0.95 metres wide (Figure 26). It was constructed of grey mud bricks and at the western side of the trench formed the foundation for [1007] in its later phases. The wall may have continued into the western section; it was not clear if it ended at that point. The western end of

[1033] was not bonded into [1007] and nor was the eastern end of [1033] bonded into [1028].

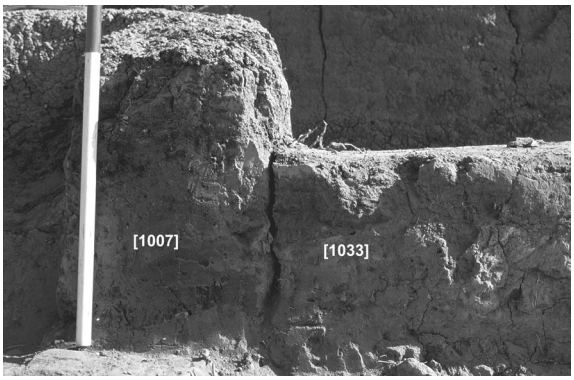


Figure 27. Wall [1007] and [1033] abutting.

The original height of [1033] could not be ascertained, but the fact that [1007] was found almost at present day ground level may suggest that it had at least been this high at some stage. The top of the wall may have been sheared off by the *sebakhin*. The alternative as for [1028] is that these courtyard walls were simply retaining walls for the area and thus a smaller internal part of a larger complex. They may never have reached any great height.

Drill core 58 (Figure 28) was made through the wall [1033] when it was first encountered in the excavation. The auger showed that the wall continued from the top for a depth of 2 metres before there was a layer of sandy clay; below was then a further mud layer for another 1 metre and this was, in turn, founded upon a domestic level with charcoal and fish-bone and then upon a pottery-dense layer (Wilson, 2006a: 185-6). It seemed most likely that the upper 2 metres of mud with some pottery constituted the Phase III wall, then up to a further metre was either settlement deposits or the foundations of an earlier wall. At around 4 metres from the top of the auger hole, there was a concentration of bone and black organic matter, with pottery. From this point to 5 metres from the top of the drill hole there was pottery signifying settlement strata. This seemed to be founded upon a silt-clay river levee and, at around 8 metres from the top of the drill hole, fine sand and concentrations of broken shells suggested the edge of a waterway or river channel. The succeeding stratum contained sandy-clay and compact silty-clay soils to the final core at 9.61 metres below the wall top. The settlement at Kom Rebwa seemed to be founded upon an area through which a river channel originally ran and after this had moved, the sediment laid down provided new land for a new settlement.

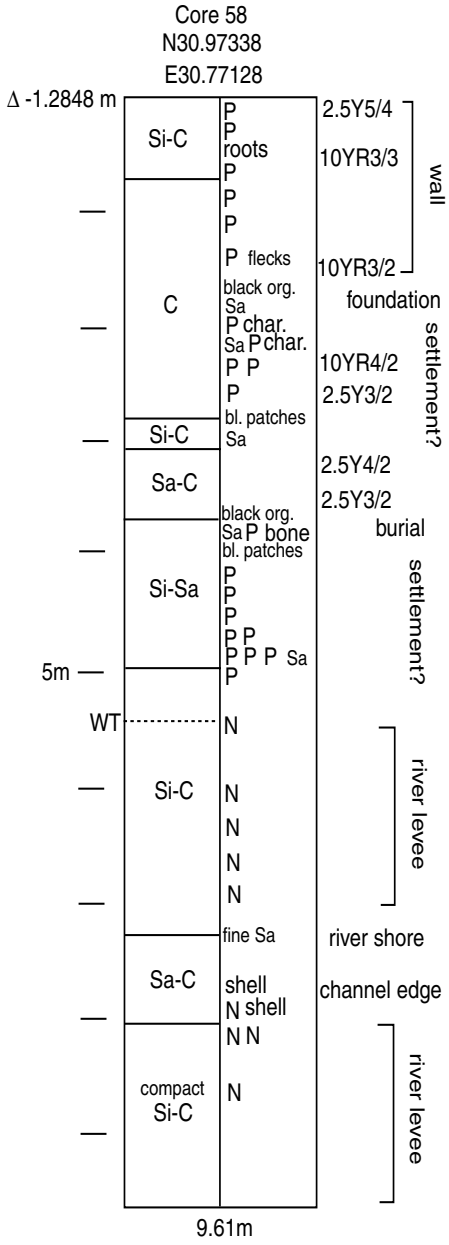


Figure 28. Drill auger 58 from the top of [1033]. P = pottery, N = calcified nodules.

The courtyard floor was not easy to determine because it did not seem to have been paved and the main surface may have consisted of beaten and compacted mud. The mud surface, [1020] and [1041] was extremely hard in places and difficult to remove, suggesting extreme compaction. The mud was pushed up against the

walls in concave piles, giving the bases of the walls a rounded appearance. The mud contained many small fragments of broken pottery, pressed down into it.

The small finds from this area represented a rather undistinctive set of material, some of which may have come from the degradation of mud-brick. They included a fragment of a copper alloy object, heavily corroded (S.080), a polished sharp, black point, broken from an arrow head or hair-pin, perhaps made from ebony or fire hardened and blackened bone (S.443) and a small, plain gold ring, with a raised ridge around the centre of the band S.447. There were also some beads, including three faience ring beads (0.4-0.2 cm) and two fragments of a spherical, faience bead (S.444), a fragment of carnelian poppy head pendant (S.445), four glass ring beads, of which three were joined together, five faience ring beads, one glass spherical bead, one glass cylinder bead and many fragments of glass spherical beads (S.446). All of these objects are suggestive of domestic small finds, but they could also have been residual; they may have occurred in earlier strata and been gathered up in building the mud brick structures of the next layer. When that mud brick decayed, the objects fell out of the brickwork and into the new strata. It is therefore very difficult to assign this material to this level, for example, the poppy head pendant can be dated to the middle of Dynasty 18. As in other strata, the presence of a pottery rim sherd, with ridge, polished orange in colour (S.508) and which can be dated conventionally to the end of the Old Kingdom suggests the mobility of material through strata.

Perhaps more useful for understanding the function of the courtyard space is the functional material found in the layer. There were several fragments of limestone in the courtyard, including the stone upon the amphorae in the south-west corner and four other medium-small pieces of stone lying in the north-western part of the courtyard. They could have been used for many functions, from stabilising pottery, to resting bowls, to use as weights, or for smoothing rough surfaces. In addition to these fragments, there was also a fragment of red ochre, with sides smoothed from rubbing, which could have been used for applying to pottery or putting red rims on bowls (S.438); a smoothed and rounded quartzite pebble, which could have been used as a fine-grinder or a burnisher (S.442); a black, unworked flint chip (S.507); and two fragments of Nile silt crucible (?) with slag encrusted upon it and some copper alloy corrosion (S.473). These objects may suggest that the area was used for pottery manufacture and for the finishing stages of vessels. The crucible may suggest that there were other production processes in the area, possibly the small scale manufacture of copper objects, or, perhaps more likely because of the lack of massive amounts of slag and kiln material, the small scale remelting of copper tools for domestic purposes, such as needle or chisel reworking.

The original floor of the courtyard, subsequently covered by up to 20 cm of the mud fill, may have been a more regular mud-brick pavement [1072], which stretched from north to south along half of the courtyard area. The bricks seemed to have been thrown down over pits, covering them and enabling the courtyard and its walls to be constructed. The other half of the courtyard area was levelled off with a fill of distinctly red earth [1073]. The courtyard foundation layers are described in detail in Chapter 4.

3.3 Oven 2 and 'Kitchen' area (compiled with material from the excavation notes of N. Harrington).



Figure 29. View over top levels of Oven 2 and 'Kitchen'.

This area lay to the west of the courtyard and comprised oven [1013], with a narrow surrounding wall [1007] (Figure 29). The wall enclosed a small area, which continued into the western section so that its limits were not determined. It seemed clear that the oven and the courtyard were related and were part of the same complex, but access to the walled area was not obvious. The wall [1007] was built upon the western continuation of the courtyard wall [1033], suggesting that they were envisaged as part of the same complex from the beginning. The wall [1007] may have been a low retaining wall to keep the cooking and food preparation area separate from the activities in the courtyard.

As Oven 2 was substantial enough to survive into the succeeding phase, it was a dominant feature of the earlier phase. Although it had been built of only one brick width thickness, the outside had also been plastered with mud and it seemed likely that this had been done more than once, perhaps to refurbish the oven at regular intervals. Some pottery seemed to be actually in the interior of the oven wall, suggesting that the mud of the oven itself had been soft when the pottery was placed in it. Its dimensions of the oven at the end of the work were: length 1.68 metres from north to south, 1.60 metres from east to west (internal dimensions 1.38 by 1.31 metres) and ca. 0.8 metres in height from the top to the base inside.

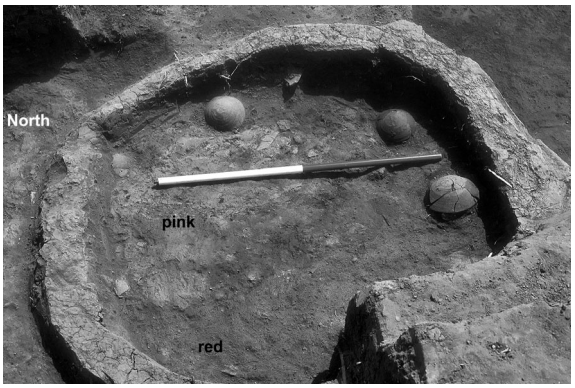


Figure 30. Top level of Oven 2, with half red burnt fill and half pink ashy fill.

The structure did not show the same kind of features normally visible in Egyptian ovens, that is they are smaller inside, with the inside burnt red-orange and the outside protected by a mud jacket and within a mud brick surround (Jeffreys, 2006: 22 and Fig. 20b). Although the contents of the Kom Rebwa oven seemed to have been burned and there was much ash associated with it (Figure 30), the inside of the oven itself was not burnt red-orange, but there were fittings fallen down into the base, which may have been the internal lining of the oven (Figure 31). The mud and soil material filling the oven was bright red in colour.

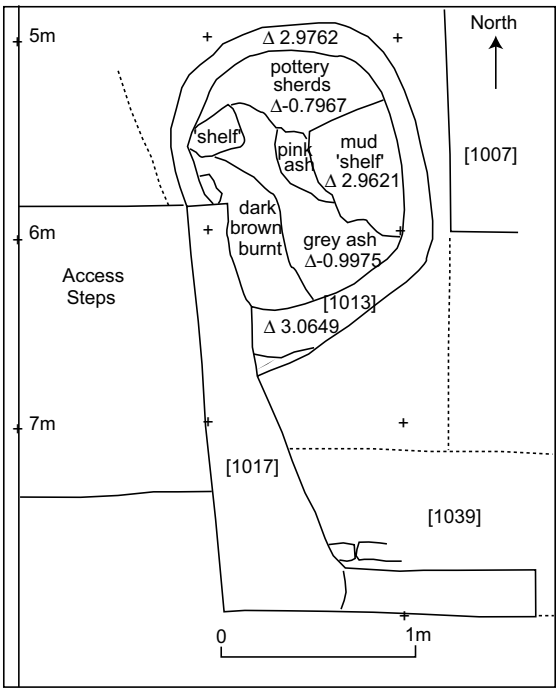


Figure 31. Oven 2, upper levels and walls.

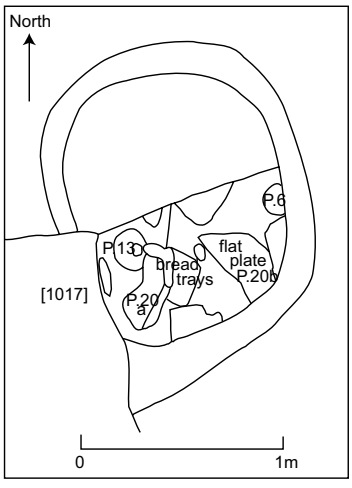


Figure 32. Half section through Oven 2, at 70 cm from the top, with bread trays and pottery.

The oven seemed to have been refurbished several times, for which there is also evidence from the inside of the structure. It was full of

pottery sherds, larger parts of vessels and whole vessels (Figure 32). They formed layers throughout the structure, suggesting that when the oven became choked with debris to a certain level, it was flattened off with some mud or earth and ash and then continued in use. The way that the oven had reached its final form may thus have been as a result of continual accretion rather than having been built in something like the final form and refurbished. The growing height of the oven kept pace with the floor levels around it as they also gained height from the ash from the oven. In this way the oven may have continued in use throughout the lifetime of the courtyard and house.

The amount of pottery inside the oven raised the possibility that it was actually a kiln, which had been used to fire pottery. The pottery was mostly made of Nile silt ranging from fine to coarse wares and comprised almost the full range of types, except that there were significantly no bread moulds. This could have been for two reasons: firstly, either the bread moulds were not made in such kilns, but in a different kind of structure; or secondly, the bread made in this oven was cooked directly on the wall of the oven and not in moulds, as in a *tandur* oven. Within the Oven there was a mud brick platform on the northern side, which may have been the access point into the structure. It could have been stacked from the side, which would have made it easier for those cooking to put bowls and dishes into the oven and then retrieve them. If the oven had been top-loading, it would have been difficult to extract full vessels, unless the oven was open and gradually filled up with material, with the sides being increased as the material inside increased in height.

The way in which the oven was fired is also not clear. There was a good amount of fine, pink, ashy material inside the oven itself and this seemed to have been thrown out to the south and the north, perhaps during cleaning. The ash looked like the remains of fine burnt chaff, which may have come from straw or hay, or perhaps dung patties, which contained fine chaff processed by the animals and excreted, plus chaff and straw added to the patties. They could have been burnt in the bottom of the oven or to one side and the food placed at the other side or upon the mud brick shelf, raised up slightly above the heat. This would have been an effective way of generating the heat and of allowing access to the bowls containing the food. It is how ovens in modern Egyptian mud-brick houses are built, and these are fed from the top and emptied below, with the cooking area being a flat metal plate beside the fire. In the ancient oven, flat plates such as the large bread plates could also have been set to one side.

Six samples taken from [1013] were analysed and, aside from expected quantities of small pottery fragments and burnt brick, contained rodent bones, fish bones, small pieces of charcoal and a high number of emmer wheat glume bases, with only a few grains, indicating that chaff may have been used for fuel for the oven (Cotton, Appendix 6: 1.4). Two fragments of Cyperus esculentus root were also identified from the sample, perhaps part of the material for burning, although it could also be considered as a foodstuff (Malleson, Appendix 6: 2.4). Amongst the material from inside the oven there were two pieces of sickle blade, burnt white, which may have been introduced accidentally amongst the chaff. Twenty four medium to large mammal bones were also found in the oven, perhaps also from cooking, as they did not seem to have been highly burnt as if they were fuel. They could not be identified further to species level.

There were a few small finds amongst the pottery including, two upper parts of cobra statues (S.423 and S.425) and the upper part of a cobra statue, with one side worn as if the fragment had been used as a rubber or grinder (S.424). A number of finds looked as if they had been accidentally burnt in the oven: a limestone, conical gaming piece (S.426); a fragment of pottery, with vitrified slag on one side (S.427); and a piece of pumice stone (S.183). There were also at least six tessons (S.251) and one fragment of leaf-shaped, unbaked mud (S.252). It may have been intended to harden or 'fire' the object or something else to which it belonged in the oven, and for some reason this was never done. This may suggest that the Oven was used primarily for cooking or heating food, but that it could also fire or harden mud or silt wares at a relatively low level. It should be noted that few 'wasters' were found amongst the pottery.

The base of the oven was reached at a depth of ca. 80 cm. The base contained broken fragments of oven fittings (Figure 33). They consisted of large coarseware fragments, which

may have acted either as platforms in the bottom of the oven to raise up the food bowls or as linings for the oven, and a lid to help to seal the oven at the top and so generate greater heat.

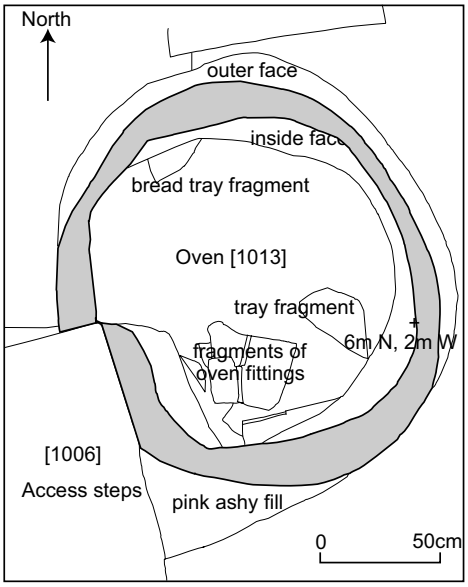


Figure 33. Base of Oven 2.

The function of most of the vessel types in the oven was for the preparation of food. Most of the pottery from the oven [1013] was bowls, including bases, of all of the types, ranging from conical in shape to round and flattened off bases. There were also carinated forms and bowls with internal ledged rims and ring bases.There were some closed rims, but not in great numbers, and globular jars. One small, almost complete, goblet body was found, which was unique for the site. No bread moulds were found in the oven, but there were some thin platter fragments and a bread tray rim. Most of the fabrics for the vessels were Nile silt or mixed fabrics.

The range of bowls suggests that the oven could have been used to heat all kinds of foodstuffs, with the straight-edged bowls acting both as containers and lids. Of the twelve complete examples, three had red rims, which may be significant in determining the exact role played by the bowl. The internal ledged bowls seem to have been for more concentrated heating as they have greater mica content in their ware. The carinated bowls have been proposed as milk bowls and so may have been for the heating of milk to produce curds or cheese. The large globular jars may have contained some kind of soup or broth, while the large coarseware vessels could have been used for a variety of baking or heating purposes.

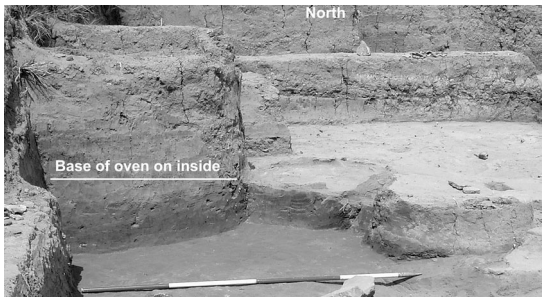


Figure 34. Oven 2 from the outside, built on top of earlier layers in Phase IV.

The oven had been first built perhaps as an adjunct to the courtyard and continued in existence throughout the life of the house, perhaps being remodelled and built up as the surrounding area filled with ash or mud brick debris (Figure 34). There was evidence that several steps had been built up on the outside, towards the top of the oven. The last phase of this oven was designated as [1015].

The debris and ash that had been thrown out of the oven or gathered during the operation of the oven lay against it and around it in the small walled-off area to the north of it, which seemed to have functioned as part of a kitchen area. This material was excavated in two stages and designated [1018] and [1022] at the upper level and [1096] and [1100] lower down, with pink ashy fill around and inside it at [1097] and [1098]. The latter two phases may have been foundation levels for this oven. The test trench confirmed that the first construction of the oven happened at the same time as the rest of the house building.

The area to the north of Oven 2 [1018]-[1042] may have been a food preparation area and the place where those using the oven sat in order to stoke, clean and place bowls into the oven. The area therefore contained sporadic patches of black and grey ash, a great deal of pink ash, broken pottery, some complete vessels and also individual, and groups of, mud bricks, perhaps used for supporting pots. In the north-eastern corner of the area, there was a rectangular patch, around 65 by 46 cm at its maximum dimensions, consisting of pink ash [1022]. It contained fragments of bowls, both everted rim and internal ridge types. The relationship between [1018] and

[1022] was not immediately clear, although it seemed at first that [1022] had been cut into [1018] and then filled with ash and the pottery. The pink ash also lay south of the oven against the wall [1039], filling the gap between the oven and the wall (Figure 35), implying that the oven was functioning while the room was in use.

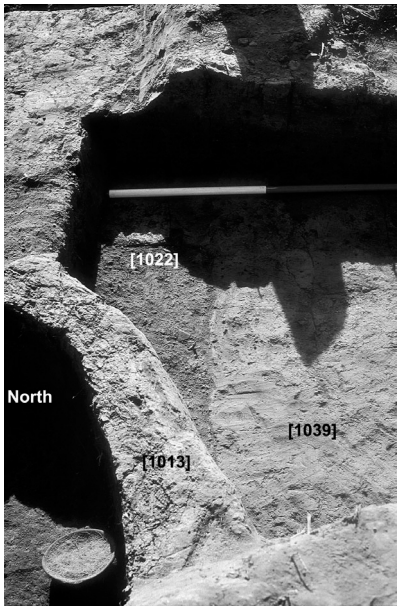


Figure 35. Oven 2 abutting wall [1039], with gap between them filled by pink ash.

There was a number of small finds from context [1018], including a limestone grinder (S.162), two limestone fragments with an incised line (S.181 and S.182) and a sandstone fragment which may have been used as a grinding stone or whetstone (S.250). There was also a fragment of the body of a cobra statuette, without head or base (S.171), and one flint blade, with a denticulated edge which had been burnt (S.231). Although the latter was found to the west of the oven, it seems likely that it was discarded from it in the pink ashy material.

The earlier phases of the 'kitchen' north of the oven also suggested continuous refurbishment, cleaning and restoration of the area. The long-lived wall [1006] forming the back western edge of the oven enclosure was founded upon pink-burnt chaff material and so seems to have been built as an after thought in the oven area, perhaps to strengthen the structure on the western side and enclose a cooking or preparation area.

An original dark mud bench [1096] was built here, having perhaps been the base of a larger wall enclosing the oven. The fill associated

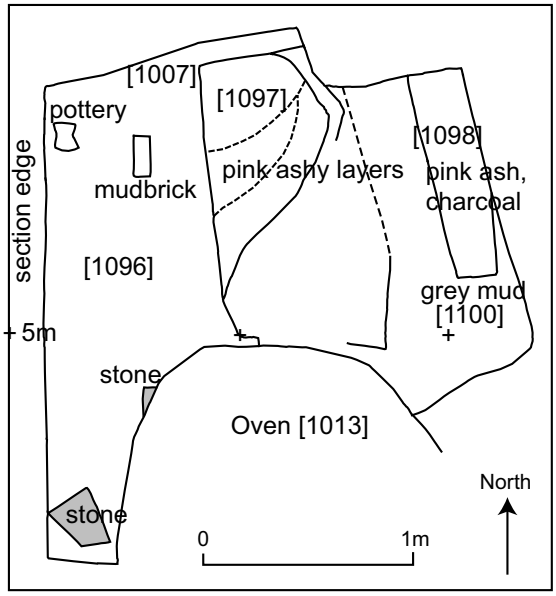


Figure 36. Early phases of area to the north of Oven 2.

with this first wall was pink-burnt ash immediately against the wall filling the corner and centre of the rectangular 'room' enclosed by the walls [1097] (Figure 36). It seems that the oven had produced piles of the pink ash, which were banked up against the wall and a new layer of dark mud was put down upon an old ashy layer directly north-east of the oven to create a new floor or sitting surface [1100]. It is likely that this dark mud and the dark mud bench represent the first fittings associated with the oven in the first period of its use (Figure 37).

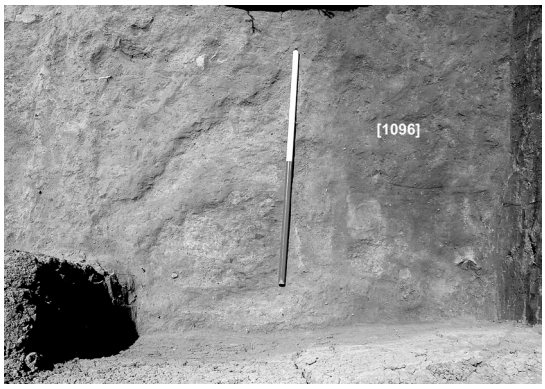


Figure 37. Ash and mud north of Oven 2.

The relative levels of the oven base (measured at 2.2496 m asl.), courtyard bricks (2.2668 m asl.) and base of [1007] (2.3608 m asl.) were within 12 cm of each other and suggest that these elements were constructed at the same time.

The earlier industrial area (Phase V) with its ash was sealed down and the oven became the main cooking facility for the new house and courtyard. Perhaps at this time the extension of the wall [1007] was constructed, also over the pink ash layer (perhaps showing as [1098]), in order to create the rectangular room for storage or as a cupboard. The room would have been relatively sheltered and enclosed. Not surprisingly, there were hardly any finds in the ash, except for a small toggle-shaped piece of fired clay in [1097] (S.536).

3.4 Room 1 - The Transverse Room (Figure 38)

Room 1 of the House was oriented with the doorway facing north, and extending up to 7 metres from east to west and 5 metres from north to south, making it rectangular in plan.

Main Entrance of House and Room 1

The north wall [1039] was the main wall of the house and included the entrance doorway into Room 1. It was preserved to a height of 1.01 metre and to a maximum thickness at the base of 0.88 metre. The wall was a substantial structure as it had to support two heavy limestone door jambs and probably a lintel. The foundation for the wall, however, did not seem to be as solidly built as those of the other walls. It consisted of a shallow trench cut into the flattening fill of the area and filled with brick debris. It was then topped off with a sandy and organic or plaster surface to create the first floor of Room 1, best preserved at the northern end of [1055]. Part of the foundation underneath the door jamb was the

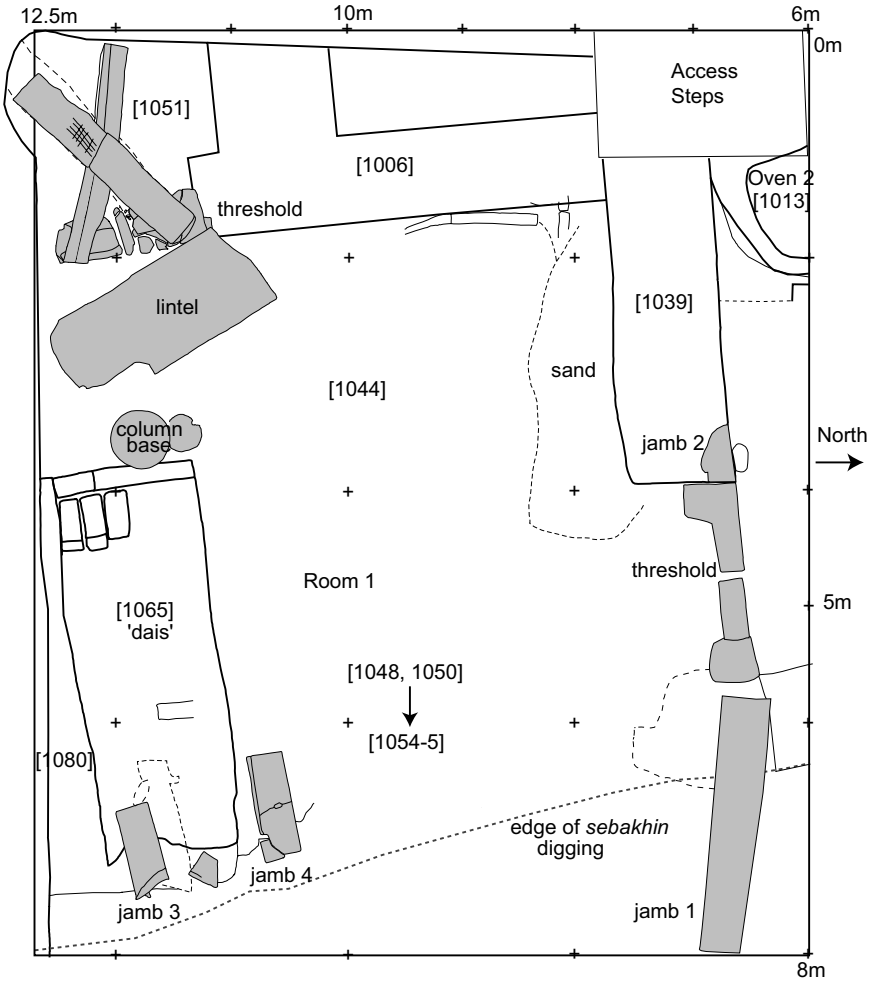


Figure 38. Plan of Room 1, with fallen stone elements.